

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 519

By Calfee

A RESOLUTION to designate October 2016 as "Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome Awareness Month" in Tennessee.

WHEREAS, prescription painkiller, heroin, and other opioid addiction remains a serious public health issue across Tennessee and the nation; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee ranks second per capita in the country for prescription drug abuse; and

WHEREAS, Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) refers to a group of health conditions that occur in a newborn exposed to addictive opiate drugs while in the mother's womb; and

WHEREAS, babies with NAS experience irritability, low birth weight, breathing problems, tremors and seizures, feeding difficulties, and other health-related challenges; and

WHEREAS, the rate of NAS births in Tennessee increased ten-fold in the last decade, with nearly 1,000 cases in 2015; and

WHEREAS, over eighty-seven percent of NAS babies in 2014 were born to mothers on TennCare; and

WHEREAS, the average cost to deliver a drug-dependent baby is over \$40,000, compared to \$7,400 for a healthy child; in 2014, the delivery of drug-dependent babies cost taxpayers roughly fifty-one million dollars; and

WHEREAS, the Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome Subcabinet Working Group is committed to raising awareness of the growing NAS problem in Tennessee, educating physicians and members of the public, and developing lasting and meaningful solutions; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED
NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE
CONCURRING, that we hereby designate October 2016 as "Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome
Awareness Month" in Tennessee and encourage our citizens to join in this special observance
and learn more about this preventable disease and the work that can be done to fight the
epidemic in Tennessee.